

CLASSIFICATION SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION

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SOURCE

1. All able-bodied males in Hungary had to serve in the army for three years. They were drafted at the age of 19. In February 1952 there were rumors that the obligatory army service would be extended to five years. Beginning in 1950, university students, who formerly had been deferred until the completion of their studies, took their military training concurrently with their university work. Relationships between officers and enlisted men were supposedly better than before World War II, but discipline in the army was still very strict. Allegedly, food was not good in the army; it consisted primarily of bread and potatoes, with very little fat or meat. The pay for enlisted personnel was 100 forints per day, and 20 per cent of the soldier's pay was withheld for his family. It was a great deal of attention was paid to the soldiers' political indoctrination which was in charge of the political officers; the regime relied on the loyalty of the younger age group in the army. The morale of the army was generally good; it was lowest among the older officers. In the spring of 1951 there were rumors in Budapest that a conspiracy had been discovered among army officers in the Debrecen garrison; not much was known about it, but it was said that many people had been arrested in this connection.

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2. Everything in Hungary was being organized along the Russian pattern; even the uniforms of the Hungarian Army were almost identical to those of the USSR. Ordinarily one could not tell Hungarian soldiers and officers from the Soviets. There may, however, have been some distinguishing mark on the belt buckle of the Hungarian uniform. There were many Russian soldiers in Hungary; a great many Soviet officers were located in Budapest, and USSR soldiers were numerous in the rural districts. Soviet officers were furnished with private apartments, the majority of which had formerly belonged to the bourgeois classes which were deported between May and September 1951. Special shops, supplied with the best goods, were reserved for the Soviet personnel. Their purchases were noted on cards; no money was involved. The shops for the Soviets were located near Benczuk utca, a side street off Stalin ut in the VI district.

3. There was a great deal of propaganda for factory workers to join the Kossuth Academy and for students to join the Honved Kollegium; it was from these two sources that the majority of the officers for the Hungarian Army were drawn.

- (a) Kossuth Akademia (formerly Ludovika) had officers' training schools located in Budapest, Esztergom, Sopron and Szombathely. The course of study was four years; students were graduated as second lieutenants. Promising students (in the 14-18 age group), particularly the sons of workers and farmers, were urged to attend the academy.
- (b) Honved Kollegium in Budapest, Nagyboldogasszony ut 27, selected its students from the university students (18-22 age group) who were preparing for a profession such as engineering, medicine, etc. University and military training were combined; students lived in the Honved Kollegium and commuted to the university for their academic work. They remained in the Kollegium for the duration of their studies; some only two years but others, those studying medicine for example, stayed five years. Upon completion of their schooling, they became second lieutenants and had to serve in the army for five years.

Officers were well paid; a first lieutenant received a salary of 1,500-2,000 forints per month which was more than the salary of a university instructor. In addition, army officers were able to get meals at 75 per cent of the regular price in some restaurants. They also had other privileges, such as getting meat without ration cards.

4. As early as 1950, there were women's units in the Hungarian Army; they were made up of volunteers. In the police force, however, women had been accepted as early as 1946.
5. I have no information about the location or possible strength of the Army Engineer Corps other than the fact that many engineers belonged to that particular unit.

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6. [redacted] I heard that many military barracks were being constructed in all parts of the country. [redacted]

7. In addition to the regular army, there was also the Security Force (Allamvedelmi Hatóság - AVH, or more popularly, AVO). Good workers were urged to join this force, the members of which were well paid.

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